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# Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington, D.C. 20250 (202) 720-4330

Letter No. 2605

April 9, 1993

***IMPROVING GOVERNMENT** was the theme of a meeting conducted with USDA employees by Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy and Vice President Al Gore. The exchange of ideas to make government more responsive to the American public, and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government programs, was aided by comments from USDA employees communicated live via satellite from cities across the nation.*

*USDA photo by Bob Nichols.*



**NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT** -- USDA will be working closely with the Departments of Commerce and Interior, and the Environmental Protection Agency, to coordinate programs designed to maximize plant and animal diversity while maintaining ecological resilience and stability. Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy testified to members of the House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries that, "While we can no sooner abandon farming and commodity production than stop breathing, our programs can be designed to maintain biodiversity as well as produce such things as timber, crops and livestock." Espy said that nature does not recognize political or jurisdictional boundaries, and is a reason why it is important to have the various federal agencies singing from the same hymn book. Contact: **Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623.**

**RURAL JOB TRAINING** -- Job training programs perform better in rural areas. Conventional wisdom suggests that higher unemployment and poverty levels, and less diversified economies of nonmetro areas would hinder success of job training programs. But data indicates that training results, costs, and availability of funds are more favorable in the typical rural than in the typical metro program. The potential of new technologies, job training and placement assistance programs can provide additional opportunities for nonmetro participants. Contact: **John Redman (202) 219-0544.**

**FIRE ANT CONTROL** -- A recent discovery in genetic studies of fire ants offers a promising method to control fire ants and halt the spread of the pests. Scientists at the University of Georgia have discovered that a single gene controls reproduction in fire ants. Efforts are now underway to learn what chemical the gene produces and whether it can be synthesized for use in controlling the ants. Fire ants first arrived in the U.S. at Mobile, Alabama in the 1930s as stowaways on a ship from South America. There are few natural predators of fire ants in the U.S. The stinging pest has swept across the country thriving in open, sun-lit areas where the soil has been disturbed. Contact: **Helen Fosgate (706) 542-0809.**

**DUTY-FREE IMPORTS** -- The government of Poland is granting unlimited duty-free imports of wheat and coarse grains until June 30, 1993. The action is taken to increase imports of basic grains, and thus stabilize internal grain prices which have risen significantly this year as the result of drought-reduced production in 1992. The government of Bulgaria has banned grain exports until October of this year because sales have depleted grain reserves. Bulgaria is now considering importing grain. **Contact: Randy Hager (202) 690-4200.**

**THE FEW ARE GETTING FEWER** -- The U.S. is depending on a fewer number of people to produce agricultural products. Latest figures show that in 1990 67 million people lived in rural areas, about 27 percent of the U.S. population. But only 4.6 million people resided on farms, about 2 percent of the population. One-half of farm residents lived in the Midwest, but they constituted only four percent of that region's population. Thirty percent of farm residents lived in the South. Figures show that the farm resident population declined by 24 percent in the 1980s, and 25 percent in the 1970s. While the rural population is increasing, the farm population is declining. **Contact: Joan Courtless (301) 436-8461.**

**SOILS NEWSLETTER** -- A newsletter on soil fertility, tillage, soil testing and other crop-related topics is published by the University of Minnesota Extension Service. "Soil Samplings" is printed seven times a year for farmers, consultants and others in production agriculture. Recent articles have included information on tillage options, research on chemicals and ground water quality, and changes in corn fertilizer recommendations. **Contact: George Rehm (612) 625-6210.**

**NATURAL PESTICIDE** -- A natural pesticide against the sweet potato whitefly and aphids has been extracted from a wild species of tobacco. Scientists at the University of Georgia's Coastal Experiment Station have discovered that sugar based fatty acids in the tobacco resist insects but are not toxic to the environment. Because wild tobacco is difficult to grow, the scientists are reviewing other tobacco plants for the natural compounds. **Contact: Gary Herzog (912) 386-3374.**

**TOBACCO ACREAGE** -- U.S. tobacco growers plan to reduce this year's plantings about three percent to 750,700 acres. Assuming average yields, the U.S. tobacco crop this year would decline about four percent from 1992's 1.68 billion pounds. Price support for flue-cured will rise 1.7 cents a pound, and burley at least 3.4 cents per pound. With an expected increase in leaf exports, total use of U.S.-grown tobacco in 1992/93 may increase from a year earlier. Annual consumption is down about 3 percent to 2,629 cigarettes per adult. The decrease is expected to continue this year. **Contact: Verner Grise (202) 219-0890.**

**PROSPECTIVE PLANTINGS** -- This year growers intend to plant 76 million acres of corn, down four percent from last year. Soybean plantings are estimated at 59 million acres, unchanged from 1992 levels. Spring wheat should total 19 million acres, up one percent from last year and the highest level since 1953. Cotton plantings are expected to total 13 million acres, one percent above last year. Cotton acreage in the Southeast will be seven percent above the 1992 level. **Contact: John Witzig (202) 720-2127.**



## FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

**AGRICULTURE USA # 1870** -- Pat O'Leary reports on USDA's efforts to organize community groups to take action on environmental and economic problems. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

**CONSUMER TIME # 1352** -- Transporting produce to you; credit rating repair ripoffs; drive through, delivery and take-out; brewing that coffee; specialty crops for you. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

**AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1862** -- USDA News Highlights; USDA budget revealed; foreign "army" to attack whiteflies; produce transport in transition; payment limitations. (Weekly reel of news features.)

**NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1615** -- Cotton's hidden costs; wasp whacks weevils; kenaf rivals alfalfa; controlling weeds with sheep; hammocks smooth out bumps for produce. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

**UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE** -- Thursday, Apr. 15, milk production; Friday, Apr. 16, vegetable production; Monday, Apr. 19, ag outlook; Tuesday, Apr. 20, crop & weather update, U.S. trade update, ag resources (land values) outlook; Wednesday, Apr. 21, dairy outlook; Thursday, Apr. 22, rice outlook, catfish processing; Friday, Apr. 23, oil crops outlook, livestock/poultry update, cattle on feed. **These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.**

**DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.**

Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

## FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

**FEATURES** -- Lynn Wyvill reports on the status of agriculture in South Dade County, Florida seven months after Hurricane Andrew. Features include housing for migrant farm workers and rebuilding the vegetable packing plants, nursery and tropical fruit industries.

**ACTUALITIES** -- USDA chief meteorologist Norton Strommen on weather and crop progress, and USDA budget director Stephen Dewhurst on USDA's budget.

**UPCOMING FEATURES** -- DeBoria Janifer reports on purslane research; Pat O'Leary reports on proper handling of tomatoes; Lynn Wyvill reports on the status of Florida's tropical fish business after the impact of Hurricane Andrew.

**EVERY OTHER WEEK** -- Agriculture Update with anchors Eric Parsons and Lori Spiczka. 4:30 of USDA farm program information in news desk format with B-roll.

*Available on Satellite Galaxy 6, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., EDT, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., EDT.*

## OFFMIKE

**ALMOST FREE LUNCH...**was the centerpiece of Ag Week and Ag Day in Iowa. **Von Ketelsen** (KOEL, Oelwein, IA) served as master of ceremonies at an event serving nearly 1,000 people who paid only 66 cents each. Members of the Iowa chapter of the National Agricultural Marketing Association and the Iowa Farm Commodity Association served the lunch that consisted of Iowa produced products. The program emphasized that the American farmer receives only a small fraction of every food dollar spent by consumers. All proceeds were given to the local food bank. Thanks to **Herb Plambeck** (Living History Farms, Des Moines) for the information.

**POLAND...**is on the itinerary of **Ed Slusarczyk** (Ag Radio Network, Utica, NY). Ed will join a 14 member group, representing businesses in the United States, on the Trade and Investment Program of the Office of International Trade and Development. They will meet in Poland with food exporters April 25 to May 1 to provide information about how to increase agricultural exports to the U.S. On May 14 Ed and **Jeff Stewart**, of the network, will be in Poland and Germany for two weeks to boost U.S. exports in West and East Europe.

### ***Farm Broadcasters Letter***



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**CONGRATULATIONS...**to **Lynn Ketelsen** (Linder Farm Network, Willmar, MN), selected to receive Mid-Am's Salute Award at the 25th annual delegates meeting. Lynn is the 19th farm broadcaster to be recognized by the organization during the 23-year history of the award. **Herb Plambeck**, mentioned above, was the first broadcaster recognized when the award began in 1970. ...to **Walt Shaw** (KRAK, Sacramento, CA) for the four-column coverage in the March 1993 issue of Mid-Am Reporter of Walt and his farm broadcasting career .

**RECENT VISITORS...**to USDA Radio & TV include **Dennis Morrice** (KICD, Spencer, IA), **Bob Ziegler**, (WIMA, Lima, OH), **Joe Hardin** (WBZI, Xenia, OH), **Chip Nelson** (WKFI, Wilmington, OH), **Mitsuhiro Yokoyama** (Embassy of Japan), **Ichiro Honda** and **Masanori Sato** (public relations office of the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries).

**LETS TALK SAFETY...**to help producers get safely through another planting season.

**VIC POWELL**  
Chief, Radio & TV Division